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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PHUM](#) [NL](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/IRAQ: HUMAN RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

REF: A. THE HAGUE 79
[1](#)B. 1-16-09 EMBASSY BAGHDAD CLASSIFIED O/I

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons
1.5(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Dutch are promoting human rights and business in Iraq. The Dutch MFA has been affected by the parliamentary discussion of the Netherlands' response to the Iraq war. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On February 3, Herman Quarles van Ufford, Director of the MFA's Gulf State Division, discussed his December 2008 trip to Baghdad and Irbil. On human rights, he noted that the Kurds in Irbil requested Dutch funding to stop honor killing, but he doubted how committed they were to that effort. In Baghdad, Quarles was surprised at the liberal presence and dress of women, and the apparent reduction of the mullahs' control over daily life. Quarles noted that the Dutch are concerned about Camp Ashraf, where Dutch nationals may be detained. Dutch MFA Iraq desk officer Dirk Jan Wierenga noted the Dutch are still waiting, after a January 27 briefing by Iraqi National Security Adviser Al Rubaie on the issue, to receive a list of individuals in Ashraf who claim third country nationality or refugee status. Overall in 2008, the Dutch provided 10 million euros in humanitarian aid to refugees and IDPs, 2 million euros for demining, and about 3 million euros for democracy and governance programs.

[1](#)3. (C) Quarles noted that during his visit the Kurds promoted northern Iraq as "the place" for investment. The Dutch expect to support a trade visit to Kurdistan in April or March. Wierenga said the Dutch had received "positive signals" about a possible Iraqi visit to the Netherlands, so FM Verhagen is inviting FM Zebari to visit, likely within months. However, Quarles said the Dutch reportedly invited Iraqi Oil Minister Al-Shahrastani to the Netherlands, but Al-Sharistani was cautious about possible perceptions of improper ties to potential investors, and so declined a near-term visit.

[1](#)4. (C) Quarles noted that his office had been busy helping respond to the parliamentary debate of the government's 2003 decision to support the Iraq war. The Dutch permrep at the United Nations was on track to represent the Netherlands at NATO, but his nomination was pulled back after it was learned he withheld a memo on Iraq from the PM during the 2003 Dutch debate.
GALLAGHER